

Introduction to NPDES Permits



General Outline

- Part I - NPDES Permit Process
- Part II - Content of a NPDES Permit



Part I

NPDES Permit Process

What is an NPDES Permit?

- ◆ It is a license....
 - Issued by the EPA or a state or tribe (through delegation)
 - Granting permission to discharge to water
- ◆ A permit is a privilege not a right

Who Needs a Permit?

All “point
sources”
discharging
“pollutants”
into “waters of
the U.S.”



Must obtain an
NPDES permit
from EPA or an
approved state*
or tribe

* States have not received delegation to write permits on tribal lands

Definitions

- **Pollutant** means dredged spoil, solid waste, incinerator residue, filter backwash, sewage sludge, munitions, chemical wastes, biological materials, radioactive materials, heat, wrecked or discarded equipment, rock sand, cellar dirt, and industrial, municipal, and agricultural waste discharged into water

Definitions

- **Point source** means any discernable, confined, and discrete conveyance, including but not limited to, any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, rolling stock, concentrated animal feeding operation, landfill leachate collection system, vessel or other floating craft from which pollutants are or may be discharged.

Laws, Regulations and Standards

- ◆ Clean Water Act/ Water Quality Act 1987
- ◆ Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- ◆ State/Tribal Water Quality Standards*
- ◆ <http://www.gpo.gov>

* In R-10 the Puyallup and Chehalis tribes have approved water quality standards (WQS). The Warm Springs, Coeur d'Alene, Umatilla, and Makah Tribes have submitted WQS for review. EPA promulgated WQS for the Colville tribe.

Types of Permits

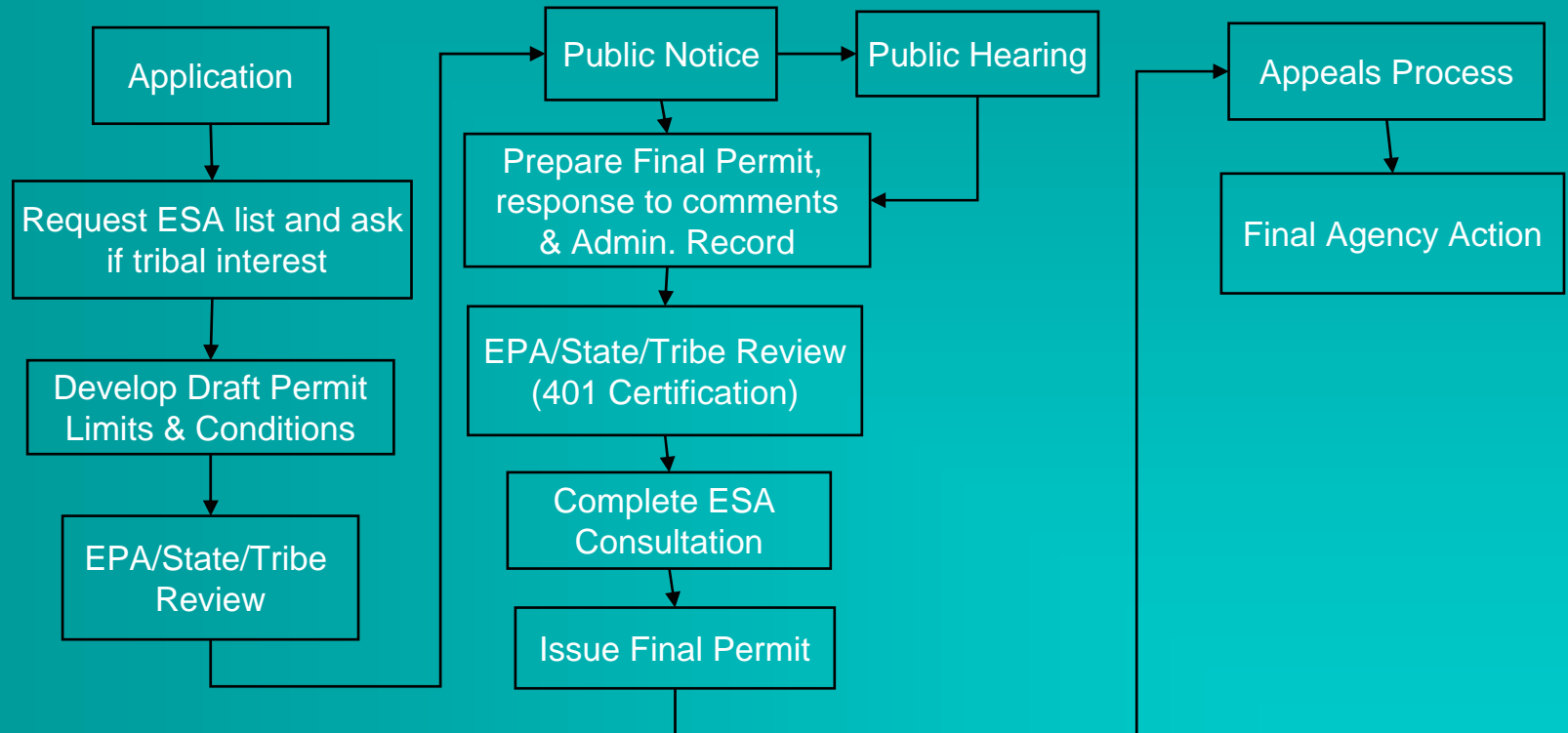
◆ Individual Permit

- single applicant
- one permit issued

◆ General Permit

- several applicants
- one permit issued
- category (placer mining, log transfer facilities, seafood processors, oil and gas, CAFO)
- geographical area (statewide, watershed)

Individual Permit Process



Part II

Content of NPDES Permit

Content of NPDES Permit

- Effluent Limits
- Monitoring
- Reporting
- Record Keeping
- Special Conditions
- Standard Conditions

Effluent Limits

Types

- ◆ Technology-based
- ◆ Water quality-based
 - Numeric
 - Narrative

Monitoring

Purpose

- ◆ Permit compliance
- ◆ Basis for enforcement actions
- ◆ Assess treatment efficiency
- ◆ Characterize effluents
- ◆ Characterize receiving water

Monitoring Types

◆ Self-monitoring

- internal
- effluent
- ambient (for background or to demonstrate compliance with WQS)
- sediment
- biological (whole effluent toxicity)

◆ Compliance monitoring (by inspectors)

Examples of Permits

- Region 10 Website
- www.epa.gov/r10earth/
 - click on water
 - click on surface waters
 - click on recently issued or draft permits